





Preparing for Your New Dog or Puppy

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Congratulations on your new addition! The purpose of this handout is to help you prepare for your new dog before you take him home. When you adopt, you will also be receiving a complimentary training DVD. While this is a joyful and exciting time, you must remember what your new family member has been through. Your new dog or puppy has either been surrendered by their previous family or been left alone to fend for themselves in a world that they do not understand and shelter life is a stressful experience. Below are some tips to reduce the stress of adapting to a new family.

 **Dog proof your home by viewing it from the dog's level.** Get down on your knees and look around each room for hazards and items that you don't want your dog to have access to and move them to a new level. Things to think about are electrical cords, coffee table items, any loose items like shoes and open faced book shelves.

 **Search out a basic obedience class and enroll in the next available class.** This will help prevent any unwanted behaviors. Behaviors such as digging, jumping, mouthing, barking and many others, are natural behaviors and you need to teach your dog what is acceptable to you. The best way to accomplish this is to attend a basic obedience class. It will be money well spent! To find local trainers and classes, visit the Association of Pet Dog Trainer's website at www.apdt.com.

 Items to have before picking up your dog at the shelter.

- **Food and water bowls**
- **Premium quality foods**, such as name brands found in the grocery store are good choices. Stay away from grocery store brands. Dry food is best for your pet's teeth but getting the proper nutrition is most important so you may have to add canned food to your pet's diet in the beginning.
- **Collar with ID tag and leash** — The collar should be large enough to allow for some growth if you are adopting a puppy, but should be able to be buckled so that the space between the collar and the neck can fit two fingers between them. It's important to put visible identification on your new dog immediately. The leash should be 6ft in length. Retractable leashes tend to break easily so are not a good option and once your pet is leash trained, a harness can be used.
- **Dog appropriate chew toys** — Prevent your new dog from playing with inappropriate objects by providing appropriate and stimulating toys.
- **Kennel/crate** — The use of a crate is not a cruel practice as dogs are den animals and prefer a place where they feel comfortable and secure. The crate should be a positive place for them. Never punish your dog by putting him the crate! Choose another location for 'time outs' such as a bathroom. Crate training will also give you peace of mind when you cannot supervise your new dog and help you housebreak your new dog if they are not already housebroken.



Be prepared when you pick up your new companion.

- Once you have your new dog and are leaving the shelter let your friend relax outdoors for a few minutes before getting into the car. This will give you a chance to start to build a bond and his trust in you and give him an opportunity to relieve himself. If your new dog is small enough, a travel crate is safest for everyone. If you are adopting a dog too large for a crate, try to have a friend or family member accompany you to give your new pet attention during their first car ride with you.
- Once at home, let your new dog out of the car and stay outside with him for a few minutes to give him an opportunity to get accustomed to the new surroundings and again another chance to relieve himself (remember, he's probably nervous!).
- When entering your home for the first time, keep your new dog on the leash while he is investigating his new surroundings. It is best for you to set the ground rules in your home while maintaining control over your new pet. Only take him/her to the rooms that you will allow access to in the future. This should take about 30 to 45 minutes.
- Now it is time to bring your dog outside. Take him to the place you want him to eliminate. Let him investigate the area, while still on leash.



When introducing a new dog to your current dog:

- Remember that we recommend that new shelter dogs and puppies not be introduced to current dogs for at least ten (10) days until there is no risk of passing a contagious respiratory infection.
- Isolate your current dog or keep him with a friend or family member in a part of the house that your new dog will not be introduced to yet. The goal is to get your new dog accustomed to the new environment with as little stress as possible.
- Your dogs, old and new, will be able to smell each other on your clothes which will help during the introduction process. When you are ready to introduce your two dogs, they should be able to see each other but not be in the same room. Having a friend help you take the dogs for a walk is a great way to introduce new dogs on neutral territory. Once you are certain there are no aggression issues, then they can be introduced to each other while both are on a leash.

Thank you for adopting one of our shelter pets!